

Spherical vase  
Rhododendron

Emile Gallé  
ca. 1925

Kugelvase, Rhododendron, um 1925  
Entwurf: Emile Gallé  
Herstellung: Etablissements Gallé, Nancy, FR  
Material/Technik: Überfangglas, luftgepresst, Hoch-  
und Nadelätzung, geätzt, poliert  
25.6 × 25.6 cm  
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK



Emile Gallé (1846–1904) from the French town of Nancy was among the most successful protagonists of French Art Nouveau. In his ethereal glass objects, the trained botanist faithfully rendered floral motifs while lending them a symbolic setting.

Emil Gallé let the blooming rhododendron proliferate in a natural growth pattern across the surfaces of the squat spherical vase. Tirelessly experimenting with new techniques, he developed a carved cameo glass technique that contributed from the 1880s onward to the distinctive look of his glassware. The originally colorless glass was overlaid with multiple layers of colored glass—here in light blue and violet. In the elaborate studio process, the design drawing was first transferred to the vessel using stencils and then covered with a coating of asphalt varnish. When the piece was bathed in an acid solution, the unprotected areas were etched out of the built-up layers. This step was repeated with changing stencils, giving rise to the colored relief decoration with its graded optical depth. Gallé set out to produce high-quality objects in series, though not merely to meet the enormous demand. His vision was to make

industrially manufactured glass products available to the wider public. By 1889 Gallé employed in his workshops and shops in Paris, Frankfurt, and London over three hundred staff members who lived by this credo. In 1901 he joined forces with his competitors Daum Frères, René Lalique, and Gabriel Argy-Rousseau to found the École de Nancy, which represented the interests of the Lorraine glass artists. After Gallé's death, the Etablissements Gallé continued to produce his glass designs under the direction of his widow and son-in-law until 1931. (Sabine Flaschberger)

<https://www.eguide.ch/en/objekt/rhododendron/>

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